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DECEMBER

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM
YEAR TO YEAR."

All the Year Round
a
Weekly Journal
CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

PART 13.

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"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

NO. 53. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1869.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

VERONICA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE."

IN FIVE BOOKS.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER VIII. CATCHING AT A STRAW.

DURING the first three weeks of his stay at Naples, Sir John Gale appeared to be better than he had been for a long time previous. He did not pay many visits, but he received a considerable number of guests twice a week. The guests were chiefly gentlemen, but a few ladies came also.

Veronica's magnificent toilets were criticised by the women, and her striking beauty discussed by the men. She received homage and flattery enough to satisfy even her appetite for such tribute. She drove out daily in an elegant equipage. She had servants at her command. Her vanity and indolence were ministered to as assiduously as though she had been the most pampered sultana who ever dyed her fingers with henna. But although these things did afford her real delight at moments, they utterly failed to make her happy. A ceaseless under-current of anxiety ran through her life. She passed hours of suffering from unspeakable apprehension of evils to come.

Her pain of mind spurred her on to pursue the one object she had in view, with a courage and energy which she wondered at herself. The prospect of humiliation, exposure, and contempt, in lieu of homage, flattery, and envy, was unbearable. It roused in her a passion of terror: and passion is powerful.

The strange indisposition which had so suddenly seized Sir John at the Villa Chiari, had suggested to her the thought that he might die suddenly. For a time, that anxiety was appeased by the improvement

in his health after they first reached Naples: it was appeased, but still it lived.

Her feelings towards him underwent strange revulsions. Sometimes she told herself that she hated him with all her heart; at other times she clung to him from the sheer necessity of having some human creature to cling to. She was unable to live solitarily self-sustained, and there were moments when she would rather have been reviled in anger than made to feel that she was an object of indifference.

But, to Sir John at least, she was not the latter. She occupied more of his thoughts than she was aware of. He had not forgotten the look of intelligence he had seen on its way from Veronica's eyes to Barletti's. He often thought of it: especially as he got better, and had leisure to direct some of his private meditations towards other objects than himself.

When he thought of that look, Sir John was jealous: jealous not so much with the jealousy of Love, as with the jealousy of Power. He would have been jealous of Paul, if he had suspected him of diverting any of the attentions due to his master, into another channel. It was not displeasing to Sir John that Barletti should admire Veronica. Sir John liked that everything belonging to him should be admired. It amused him to see Veronica play off her pretty airs on the prince, and treat him with an alternation of condescending smiles, and stares of cold hauteur. But that look he had intercepted, implied no playing off of pretty airs: it expressed a confidential understanding, appeal, and reliance.

Veronica had been so perfectly prudent, that it was difficult for Sir John to conjecture what opportunity there could have been for the establishment of anything like a confidence between her and Barletti. She

had not remained alone with him for a moment during dinner, and she had been careful to speak to him in Italian, so that the servants might understand what was being said. All this Sir John well knew, and was puzzled. He would have been glad to convince himself that he had misinterpreted that fugitive glance: but that could not be. It was such a look as Veronica had never given him—Sir John. The man who has a secret consciousness that he has injured you, is, we know, very ready to find cause of offence or complaint against you. It balances matters somewhat.

Sir John was always telling himself how generous he was to Veronica; how he humoured her caprices; what a dull, wretched, miserable, poverty-stricken existence it was he had taken her from; and so forth. And he compared the flattering graciousness of her manner in the old days, with the languor or violence, which made up the present time. And then she teased him. She importuned him for that which he was unable to grant; and he especially desired to avoid explaining the reasons of his inability to grant it. It really seemed hard. But now there had arisen a real and important excuse for his resentment, and lo! he was inconsistent enough not to welcome it! On the contrary it absolutely disturbed him very seriously.

Had he really cared more for this girl than he had fancied? Was there a fibre of tenderness yet lurking in that tough heart? He, at least, began to think so, and to pity himself with quite a soft sympathy. But that which was sympathy for himself, became very bitter antagonism to others. After all, what had he to complain of? He did not desire Veronica to be tenderly trustful and confiding in her manner towards him! He had never longed for a sad, appealing, questioning glance from her large, dark eyes! No: but he none the less resented the bestowal of such a look on another.

He had flattered himself that Veronica entertained a due contempt for a man so poor as Barletti. If poverty were not contemptible, why then what advantage did he, Sir John Tallis Gale, possess over Prince Cesare in the eyes of a young lady?

That was an unpleasant thought. It came unwelcomed, and remained without leave. It seemed to Sir John that unpleasant thoughts increased and multiplied with amazing fecundity. One produced another.

Then, after the first fallacious improvement in his health, which had been wrought

by change of air, his bodily ailments returned upon him. And amidst all these troubles there was Veronica pursuing her one aim, with the blind persistency of desperation. It had never entered into her head that Sir John could be nourishing any feeling of jealousy towards Barletti.

It was not long before the latter followed them to Naples, and he was received at Sir John Gale's house there, on the same familiar footing as he had held at Villa Chiari. Sir John easily fell back into his old habit of relying on Barletti for his evening's amusement. And, besides, he had a hungry curiosity to observe his behaviour with Veronica. He lay on his sofa in a kind of ambush, with his shaded lamp beside him, watching the two, evening after evening, and feeding high the fire of jealous hatred within his own breast.

It required no great acumen to discover that Barletti was becoming daily more enthralled by Veronica. He would sit and gaze at her like a man spell-bound; and the light gallantry, the high-flown compliments, the conventional flattery, had all disappeared from his speech and from his manner. He was silent in her presence, or if he spoke, it was seldom to her that his words were addressed. He had grown serious and almost sad: with the vague sadness that belongs to all deep emotion, and that no mere butterfly flirtation ever awakens.

Veronica's feeling was less easy to read.

It was not, at all events, deep enough to be self-forgetting. Sir John coming to his evening watch with a certain preconceived idea, interpreted many chance words and looks into a corroboration of that idea. Yet even Sir John's suspicion could not blind him to the fact that, let Veronica regard Barletti as she might, the prince was far from being the all-engrossing object of her life. He well knew what that object was. But it infuriated him to think that she was possibly urged on to pursue it by the hope of one day sharing her success with Barletti.

Towards Sir John himself, Veronica showed a gentleness and an assiduity that were seldom interrupted. Sometimes, however, it did happen that her temper, unused to curb or discipline, broke forth into violent reproaches and even threats, and caused him much annoyance. But then, when the burning anger had cooled a little she would come to him again with a penitent, tender, earnest pleading for forgiveness which would have been infinitely touching to an unbiased witness.

There had been a time when the vehemence of an angry woman's tongue, and the impotent rebellion of a woman's mortified spirit, would have mattered little to him. He would have opposed passion to passion, violence to violence, self-assertion to self-assertion, and would even have enjoyed his victory. But it was no longer with him as it had been. It was still dangerous to provoke him too far, and Veronica's cheeks had once been blanched by a torrent of invectives launched at her by his quivering lips. Still, such an ebullition of passion cost him too dear to be indulged in often. He had grown very feeble. He felt it, although he would not acknowledge it. For some time he made light of his illness, and refused to see a physician. But one day Veronica made the alarming discovery that he *did* see one of the leading doctors of the place daily. The doctor came in a secret sort of way, and was admitted to Sir John's apartment by Paul.

Veronica's maid (no longer Beppina, but a Frenchwoman, the Tuscan servants had all been dismissed on leaving Villa Chiari) found this out, and told her mistress: less by way of imparting information than as a means of discovering whether Veronica knew it, and co-operated with Sir John in keeping the servants ignorant of the gravity of the case.

Veronica was terrified. She turned her thoughts this way and that way in search of help. There was no one within reach, no one to be relied on, but Barletti. What better lot lay before her in any case than an alliance with him? She had learned to like him; he was gentle, and he loved her. The latter she could not doubt.

But yet that would avail her little, if she missed her aim, and failed in her great purpose. Any secret communication with Barletti risked utter ruin and loss of all.

But on the evening of the day on which she had learned the fact of the doctor's visits, the need of sympathy and encouragement became paramount, and when Barletti was saying "good-night" she gave him her hand, and, with a warning pressure, conveyed into his, a little folded paper with these words written on it, "To-morrow morning at eight o'clock I shall be walking in the Villa Reale. Be there. I wish to consult you."

The moment Barletti was gone, with the note in his hand, Veronica had a revulsion of feeling. She would have done anything to recall it. She trembled at the thought of the risk she had run. But after a night's

sleep she awoke, still uneasy and frightened indeed, but resolved to meet Barletti at the hour appointed.

CHAPTER IX. IN THE VILLA REALE.

"WHY do you not write to his family?"

"He has no living relatives; not one."

"To his friends?"

"His friends! I do not know any of his friends."

"You do not know any of his friends!"

"I—I—I know a man—a nobleman, in England, who knew him years ago in Rome. I know that Spanish attaché, and the Russian who came to Villa Chiari. I know the Duca di Terracina here, and his sister-in-law, the withered little woman with the pearls. These are scarcely the sort of friends who would be likely to afford one much comfort."

Barletti drew near her.

"I am only such a friend as these," he said, "if one counts by date of acquaintance. And yet you speak to me with confidence."

Veronica raised her eyes to his sadly as she answered: "Yes; because I think you care for me, and feel for me, and would, perhaps, do a friendly action for my sake, if not for his."

She was not without a consciousness of the effect she was producing on the man beside her, nor without an enjoyment of that consciousness. But there was truth enough in her words, and reality enough in her emotion, to send both the words and the look that accompanied them, home to Barletti's heart.

The exhibition of herself as Beauty in distress, to an admiring spectator, had a certain pleasure in it that could not be altogether destroyed by the serious terrors and troubles that encompassed her.

Barletti glanced around him with the habitual caution of an Italian, (and, be it said, of a lover. There is nothing that so speedily forms an accomplished hypocrite in small precautions as a clandestine attachment). Seeing no one in the long alley of the Villa Reale where they were pacing side by side, he took Veronica's hand, and pressed it to his lips. He was very pale, and there were tears in his eyes, and his voice was unsteady as he said:

"Ah, Veronica! There is nothing in all the world I would not do for your sake."

"I think you are a true friend."

"No friend was ever so true, so devoted, as I will be if you will trust me."

Certainly the words thus written down

do not display much eloquence on either side. But it seemed to both the speakers that they had said a great deal, and had been talking for a long time.

They walked on silently until they came to a little pier of masonry, railed in with iron bars, and abutting on the sea. They stood side by side, leaning over and looking out over the blue Mediterranean sparkling in the sunlight. A few fishing barks flitted across the horizon. Near at hand, a little gaily-painted boat moored to the stone wall rocked up and down, and the waters made a lapping sound around the keel.

White garments fluttered on the beach where a party of washerwomen had established a drying-ground. The women talked and laughed loud and volubly, and the breeze carried the shrill sounds fitfully hither and thither. No other human being was within sight. Behind them, were the green alleys of the Villa Reale; in front, the blue sea and the bluer sky.

Veronica and Cesare de' Barletti stood quite silent, she staring straight before her, he with his gaze upon her face, and holding her hand in his.

It seemed to him as though it were all a dream. She broke the silence. He little guessed how far away her thoughts had been from him, during all those minutes. He little guessed that they had been busy with persons and places he had never heard of. He had interpreted the tender melancholy in her eyes, after his own fashion.

Her mind had flown away capriciously to the old days at Shipley, and the principal figure in her musings was Maud. But she broke the silence: and in the instant of opening her lips she was back again in the present, and nervously alive to every detail of her position.

"Do you think you could find out from that doctor—I can give you his name—whether Sir John's illness is really of an alarming nature; whether he thinks there is immediate danger?"

"Physicians will not speak of their patients to a stranger," answered Barletti. He, too, was prompt to enter into the prosaic actualities; but he came back to them out of fairyland with a sigh, and a little shock, such as we feel in sleep when a long delicious flight on dream-wings ends with a sudden jar, and we aight.

"But you may not be a stranger to this physician! You may know him! Besides, if you spoke with him, I think you could easily discover what his impression was,

without direct questioning. It would be such a relief to my mind to know."

"Why do you not plainly ask Gale?"

"Oh I dare not!"

"You dare not! Is he harsh? Is he cruel? I know his temper is furious, but can he be harsh to you? These Englishmen are sometimes very brutal."

"When I say I dare not, I mean for fear of exciting him too much. You need not alarm yourself for me; nor expend any indignation, on that score, upon Sir John."

"Oh, Veronica, the thought of your being treated with unkindness is insupportable to me. Veronica, there can be no tie of affection between you and that man. He cannot value you, he cannot understand you. It is horrible to see you bound to him!"

Barletti's horror of a loveless and ill-assorted marriage was of very recent date. It was not long since he had looked upon the union of the rich Sir John Gale with the beautiful Veronica, as a quite matter-of-course and expedient arrangement, transacted on fair principles of exchange.

"You must not speak so to me," said Veronica, in a low voice.

"Veron...a, I have told you that there is nothing in the world I would not do for your sake. And it is true. But there are some things beyond my power. One of them is to feign not to love you. I would even do that, if you desired it, but I cannot. You might as well ask me to fly to Capri yonder."

The strength of passion brushed away her small reserves and affectations like summer gossamer before a great wind. She felt frightened at the potency of the spirit she had evoked. She desired to be loved, but within a convenient measure. She had thought to conjure up a sprite to serve her, not to rule her.

Her instinct taught her to appeal to his compassion. She did it genuinely, for she felt that she stood in need of help and forbearance.

"I trusted you," she said, brokenly, "and—and—you seemed to be true and gentle."

"You will not tell me that you did not know I loved you, Veronica! You did know it. Oh, mio Dio, how I love thee!"

"Men are selfish and cruel! There is none whom I can trust. You should not have said this to me now. You should not!"

The tears began to roll down her cheeks as she spoke. He was penitent when he

saw tears, but he was perplexed too. She had surely known that he was deeply in love with her: and knowing it, had come voluntarily to claim his help and sympathy! Why, then, did she call it cruel and selfish that he should speak to her of his feelings? He had no conception of the kind of hopeless devotion she wanted, and would have accepted, at any cost of pain to him.

She would fain have had him behave like Mr. Plew, at least for the present, or until the declaration of his passion should no longer be fraught with risk or trouble to herself. But Cesare de' Barletti was not in the least like Mr. Plew. And Mr. Plew's manner of loving—giving all, and getting nothing—was inconceivable to him. And yet, after his manner, he did love her with the first deep and genuine passion of his life.

"What do you command me to do, Veronica? Tell me. I cannot bear to see you shed tears," he said, speaking less vehemently.

"I cannot command you—I do not wish to command you. But I ask you as a friend, to ascertain what you can, about Sir John's illness. It is not a very great thing to do, perhaps. And yet it is more than I have any right to demand."

"I will do it. Tell me, Veronica, do you—are you so *very* anxious about your husband?"

"About—? Yes."

"Don't frown! Your frown chills me like a cloud coming over the sun. Ah, how coldly you look! There is some northern snow in your veins, even though you have Italian blood in you. And why should you be angry? You cannot love that man! It is impossible."

"I said nothing of loving."

"True. But you seem so anxious, so distressed—"

"Cannot you understand how terrible my position would be, alone here in a strange country, if—if any sudden misfortune should happen?"

"Alone! You would not be alone. Should I not be by your side? Ah, you speak of trust, but you do not really trust me."

"I do trust you. My presence here this morning is a proof that I trust you. But I must go back now. It is getting late. I came out quite alone. I did not bring even my maid."

"Oh stay awhile—a little longer! Let me look at you, and speak to you yet a few minutes longer!"

"No, no: I must go. I shall be missed. Paul is always on the watch."

"To the devil with Paul! You are not in fear of your servant! Will you go? Well, see how I obey you. There, I will not try to detain you. But, Veronica, one word. When will you meet me again? I must give you an answer, you know; I must tell you if I get any information. Will you come here to-morrow morning?"

Veronica mused a moment. "Could you not contrive to make me understand whether the doctor's answer is favourable or unfavourable, this evening when you come to *him*? A word or a look would suffice."

"No," said Barletti, resolutely. "Not a glance, not a quiver of an eyelash shall you have! I will impart no information unless you will consent to come here for it."

"Did I not say men were all selfish? *That* is your friendship; *that* is your devotion!"

"And you, Veronica, are you not very hard with me? What is it that I ask? But to see you for ten minutes away from that blighting presence! But to speak one word to you of all that is in my heart!"

"Yes: you demand the price that pleases you, for your service!"

He started back as though she had struck him.

"Signora, I demand no price. It shall be as you choose."

She saw he was wounded to the quick, and was eager to soothe him; although at the same time she felt somewhat indignant at his indignation; as a spoilt child, accustomed to give way to its humours, is startled and hurt when its arrogant pettishness is taken seriously, and resented as an injury.

"Oh forgive me!" she said. "I am very unhappy."

Those words melted him at once. But he had been deeply wounded. He could understand tears, caprice, frowns, even fury. But a bitter sarcasm, a pitiless probing of motives, was infinitely repulsive. It seemed to him so essentially unwomanly. A woman might die for you, if she loved you; or might kill you if she were jealous. That was in accordance with the arrangements of Providence. But to hear a satiric sneer from female lips, was to the Neapolitan prince almost as shocking as to have beheld a lady with a dissecting knife in her hand, and ready to use it.

"I did not think you could have spoken so unkindly, Veronica, to one who is devoted

to you heart and soul, as I am," he said, reproachfully. But he took her hand again, and kissed it.

"Perhaps," said Veronica, "it will be best that I should meet you here again, to-morrow. The place is a public promenade. There can be no reason why I should not enjoy the sunshine here of a morning. I will come."

"May I not walk with you now, until you are within sight of the Palazzo?"

"No I will go home alone. It is best so. Addio."

"Addio! I shall see you this evening. But it will be like looking at the sky from behind prison bars. To-morrow! Until to-morrow!"

As Veronica neared the porte cochère of the house she lived in, she became aware of a step close at her heels. She turned her head at the sound, and saw Paul.

"Good morning, miladi," said Paul, with his habitual grave and respectful salutation.

"Where have you been at this hour?" asked Veronica, startled out of her self-command.

"Sir John sent me to the Via Toledo, miladi. There is no more eau-de-cologne in his dressing-case, and Sir John desired to have some got at once."

The Via Toledo was far enough from the scene of Veronica's interview with Barletti.

"The sun was so delightfully bright, that it tempted me out early. I have been walking by the sea," said Veronica.

She could not for her life have resisted the temptation to make this sort of excuse for, or explanation of, her having been out at that unusual hour. And yet she hated herself the instant the words were said: and swept past Paul with intensified hauteur in her always haughty gait.

"I could not think what had become of ma—pardon, I mean of miladi," said the French maid, when Veronica re-entered her chamber. "And miladi dressed herself! Mon Dieu!"

The Abigail cast up hands and eyes at the tremendous thought.

"I had a caprice to go out by myself. I went to walk in the sunshine. This January sun is like June in England. It warms the blood in one's veins."

"O it is very true, miladi. But it burns one's skin. See how basané all these Neapolitans are! But Monsieur Paul also had a fancy to go out this morning."

"I saw Paul. His master sent him out, to the Via Toledo."

"Ah, Sir John sent him? That is dif-

ferent. But he must have made a long détour, for I saw him from my bed-room window, coming from the Villa Reale."

SCOTCH BALLADS.

THE Bannatyne Club first dined together, with Sir Walter Scott in the chair, on the twenty-seventh of February, in the year eighteen 'twenty-three. Fifteen members were present, among whom was Mr. James Maidment, sixth on the original list. From the preface to a book of Scottish Ballads and Songs, published by him ten years ago, we learn that in early youth Mr. Maidment had begun to collect songs, popular histories, and the like; and in the preface to a volume of the same kind published last year—the last new book of its sort—he recalls with natural satisfaction Scott's nomination of him to the Bannatyne Club, and the years of friendly intercourse during which the man of genius suggested occupations for the industry of the pains-taking literary antiquary. Trained at the Scotch bar, Mr. Maidment has a particular relish for details of family pedigree; his taste for antiquarian research, perhaps, brought him practice in which questions of inheritance were involved. But his services to the public in the way of a life-long study of popular literature entitle the venerable survivor from among Scott's first comrades of the Bannatyne Club to the friendly acquaintance of the larger public of our day. He has by this time edited some fifty or sixty pieces of old literature, and has almost outlived the fashion to which he was born, and to which he held for many years, of thinking the better of his publications because only a very few copies of each—sometimes not more than twenty-five—were printed. Mr. Maidment has given us lately, through an ordinary publisher, the before-mentioned couple of volumes upon Scottish ballads and songs, with an introduction to each, that contains the ripest fruit of his experience. It is a capital book, but it is a combative book, and fights a losing battle, under the banner of Sir Patrick Spens. Mr. Maidment is made rather unhappy by the heresies of Mr. Robert Chambers, which have gained ground since their promulgation, and he finds it impossible to admit that some five-and-twenty of the popular Scotch ballads are not so old as they seem. So he has revived the fight over the Lady Wardlaw Heresies, from which Mr. Cham-

bers may fairly be said to have come off victor eleven or twelve years ago.

Discovery of the sources of Scotch ballads is as troublesome a business as discovery of sources of the Nile. Hitherto nobody has gone further up than to a mutilated volume in the Auchinleck Library, written by John Asloan about the year fifteen hundred and fifteen. It includes pieces of good old Scottish verse—Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice*, Holland's *Book of the Howlet*, the *Book of the Seven Sages*, and a fragment of the *Priests of Peebles*, besides prose writing.

Then there was amiable Sir Richard Maitland—after whom, in these later days, a club for the preservation of old literature has been named. He was about nineteen years old when John Asloan was copying verse into his manuscript book. Maitland became a lawyer, an Extraordinary Lord of Session; at the age of sixty-five, when he had become blind, an Ordinary Lord of Session, and, a year later, Lord Privy Seal. Though he kept the last-named office only five years, resigning it then to his second son, he sat on the bench till he was eighty-eight years old, and lived to be ninety. His wife died on the day of his burial. During the last thirty years of his long, cheerful life, Sir Richard solaced himself in his blindness with the making of verses. Verse written upon him by Thomas Hudson, at his death, bade others take "manly Maitland" for a pattern, and live as he had done.

With love to God, religion, law, and right.
For as he was of virtue luscent light,
Of ancient blood, of noble sprite and name,
Beloved of God and every gracious wight,
So died he old, deserving worthy fame;
A rare example set for us to see
What we have been, now are, and ought to be.

Two manuscript volumes containing verse by various Scottish poets with his own, are in the Pepysian Library of Magdalene College, Cambridge. One of these volumes is in the handwriting of Sir Richard's daughter Mary. Among pieces special to the Maitland manuscript are Peebles to the Play, Douglas's King Heart, and Dunbar's Tale of Two Married Women and the Widow.

The George Bannatyne, after whom Scott named the Bannatyne Club, was the seventh child in a family of three-and-twenty, and he was born in the year fifteen 'forty-five. He was bred to trade; but it happened that, when he was three-and-twenty years old, work was stopped, men were secluded by a visitation of the plague, and he

occupied his leisure time in copying into a book—his manuscript covers eight hundred closely-written pages—the best collection of the Scottish poetry known in his time. Bannatyne went into business on his own account at the age of twenty-seven. At the age of thirty-three, he was entered as a merchant and guild-brother. He married, traded, lent money, lost his only son and his wife, married his daughter to a George Foulis, and gave or bequeathed his manuscript book of poems to the Foulises. In seventeen hundred and twelve, George Bannatyne's great-grandson, William Foulis of Woodhall, gave the book to the Honourable Mr. William Carmichael, an advocate; and in seventeen 'seventy-two, John, third earl of Hyndford, deposited it in the library of the Faculty of Advocates at Edinburgh. Like Sir Richard Maitland, Bannatyne produced verse of his own. But the great service done by these two men was in copying out verse that was worth copying, and of which a considerable part would, but for them, have been entirely lost.

It was chiefly from the Bannatyne Manuscript, lent to him by Mr. Carmichael, that Allan Ramsay, in seventeen 'twenty-four, drew the materials for his *Evergreen*: Scots poems wrote by the Ingenious before 1600. Among them are the Battle of Harlaw, and the true old ballad of Johnnie Armstrong, never before printed. At the end of the second of the two small volumes of the *Evergreen*, is a version of Hardyknute, a Fragment, which had first appeared five years earlier as a separate publication in twelve pages folio. In Allan Ramsay's version a more antique air was given to the language, and there were three additional verses. In seventeen 'forty this ballad fragment of Hardyknute was modernised and published at London, as the First Canto of an Epic Poem, with general remarks and notes. One of the general remarks was that the piece could only be the work of an author highly smitten with the fury of a poetical genius. "Far be it from me," wrote the editor, who was probably Mr. John Moncrieff, "far be it from me to compare Hardyknute with the matchless Iliad, but I will venture to say, that our author was undoubtedly blest with a large portion of the fiery spirit of Homer. . . . There is a grandeur, a majesty of sentiment, diffused through the whole; a true sublime, which nothing can surpass." There can be little doubt that the second Homer was a lady, born in sixteen 'seventy-seven, as Elizabeth

daughter of Sir Charles Halket, of Pittferran, married in sixteen 'ninety-six to Sir Henry Wardlaw, a gentleman in Fife-shire. She was sister-in-law to Sir John Bruce of Kinross, through whom the piece was made known to the polite in Edinburgh, and she died about the year seventeen 'seventy-seven. There is not a trace of *Hardyknute* in any old book or manuscript. Its success was great. Gray admired it, Thomas Warton looked upon it as a noble poem. In the *Union, or Select Scots and English Poems*, published at Edinburgh, in seventeen 'fifty-three, *Hardyknute* has a place of honour given it, with Dunbar's *Thistle and the Rose*, among the ancient poems. In seventeen 'sixty-five it reappeared in *Percy's Reliques*; but, informed by Lord Hailes, Percy ascribed the authorship to Lady Wardlaw's brother-in-law, Sir John Bruce. Sir David Dalrymple (who became Lord Hailes a year after the appearance of the *Reliques*, upon his taking his seat as a judge in the Court of Session), himself published in seventeen 'seventy, a selection of *Ancient Scottish Poems*, from the Bannatyne manuscript. "This," he said, "is the manuscript which the editor of the *Evergreen* used, but he has omitted some stanzas and added others, has modernised the versification, and varied the ancient manner of spelling. The many and obvious inaccuracies of the *Evergreen* suggested the idea of this new collection. Some pieces inserted in the *Evergreen* were composed in the last age, others in the present . . . *Hardyknute* is probably modern; certainly of no great antiquity." Scott in his *Border Minstrelsy*, called this by Lord Hailes the first classical collection of Scottish songs and ballads. But there had appeared, one year earlier, David Herd's *Collection of Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs*, heroic ballads, &c., which was a very creditable one.

John Pinkerton was the next man who gave much of his time to the study of Scotch songs. Pinkerton was a Scotchman born and bred, who after five years' service with a writer to the Signet, settled in London as a busy, irritable man of letters. He began upon *Hardyknute*, publishing at the age of three-and-twenty, in the year seventeen 'eighty-one, a volume of Scotch tragic ballads professing to contain "*Hardyknute: an Heroic Ballad*, now first published complete, with the other more approved Scottish Ballads, and some not hitherto made public, in the Tragic Stile, with Two Dissertations." Pinkerton here tried his hand upon a mock-antique continuation

of Lady Wardlaw's mock-antique fragment. Nobody was long deceived by it, and Pinkerton at last avowed himself its author. While it was in debate, he did what he could to keep up the mystification. Mr. W. Porden, architect, wrote to him: "When I had read your tales in verse, I read over again the second part of *Hardyknute*: and I must inform you that I have made up my mind with respect to the author of it. I know not whether you will value a compliment paid to your genius at the expense of your imitative art; but certainly that genius sheds a splendour upon some passages which betrays you." Lord Hailes objected to the second part of *Hardyknute* that no writer near the feudal times could show himself so ignorant of the form of their castles as the author seemed to be. Whereto Pinkerton replied, taking the argument up personally, as he felt it: "I may safely say, for my own part, that I have studied the feudal manners and those of chivalry as much as any man in Europe. . . . Your lordship will perceive that I write with the freedom that one gentleman of independent fortune should use with another when disputing about trifles." Pinkerton was then twenty-five years old, and Lord Hailes drawing near to sixty.

A volume of comic ballads soon followed the tragic, and then, in seventeen 'eighty-six, Pinkerton fastened on the Maitland manuscript, and, still interpolating spurious work of his own, published two volumes of *Ancient Scottish Poems*, never before in print, but now published from the MS. collections of Sir Richard Maitland, of Lethington, Knight, Lord Privy Seal of Scotland . . . comprising pieces written about 1420 till 1586.

Since then we have had Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, published in eighteen 'two and three; Jamieson's *Popular Ballads and Songs*, three or four years later; David Laing's *Select Remains of the Ancient Popular Poetry of Scotland* in eighteen 'twenty-one; in 'twenty-four, the *North Country Garland*; in 'twenty-five, the *Songs of Scotland, Ancient and Modern*, with an *Introduction and Notes* by Allan Cunningham. Two years after that came William Motherwell's *Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern*, with a *Historical Introduction and Notes*. In the same year with Motherwell's came Robert Kinlock's *Ancient Scottish Ballads*, recovered from Tradition, and never before published; and, in the following year, Peter Buchan's *Ancient Ballads and Songs of the North of Scotland*. The quick succession of these col-

lections showed the growing interest in the old ballad literature; and we may be sure that Lady Wardlaw and John Pinkerton were not the only folks who tried their wits in imitation of the old popular style. "I am aware," owned Norval Clyne, the most uncompromising upholder of the antiquity of ballads declared to be modern, "I am aware that one or two literary scapegraces supplemented to a trifling extent Peter Buchan's genuine recoveries with some antiques of their own manufacture." In the following year, 'twenty-nine, Mr. Robert Chambers produced two volumes of Scottish Ballads collected and illustrated; opening his budget with Sir Patrick Spens. Ten years later there appeared a new edition in six volumes of James Johnson's Scots Musical Museum, to which Burns had been a contributor. It had notes and illustrations by the late William Senhouse with additions by Mr. David Laing, and here appeared for the first time the heretical suggestion that the much-praised ballad of Sir Patrick Spens was by the same hand that wrote Hardyknute. After another twenty years, in eighteen 'fifty-nine, when Professor Aytoun's collections of the Ballads of Scotland appeared, Mr. Robert Chambers published, in one of a little series called Edinburgh Papers, which he was then issuing, a tract on The Romantic Scottish Ballads, their Epoch and Authorship. Herein he argued that Lady Wardlaw was the author not merely of two ballads but of two dozen. This was putting the old moon into the new moon's arms with a vengeance

Ohon, alas! says Patrick Spens,
That bodes a deadly storm.

The storm blew straightway from a return pamphlet by Norval Clyne on The Romantic Scottish Ballads and the Lady Wardlaw Heresy. But since that time the Lady Wardlaw Heresy has spread, and the antiquity of some of the best Scotch ballads, if not disproved, is at least in question. Mr. Maidment is vexed. He candidly gives up Hardyknute to the lady, only supposing that she may have based it on lines of an old ballad which she had heard. But he hints that perhaps it is not much to give up. Sir W. Scott did, indeed, write on a fly-leaf of Ramsay's Evergreen, "Hardyknute was the first poem I ever learnt—the last that I shall forget." But, on the other hand, Professor Aytoun esteemed it a poor performance and would not include it in his charming collection of Scotch ballad poetry. "We believe," says Mr. Maidment, "that with the ordinary devourers of this species of literature it was never popular. During

a long course of years we have never had the luck to pick up a stall copy; the Flying Stationers, the best judges of what suited their customers, not considering it an eligible republication." Let Hardyknute go then; but not Sir Patrick, not the other poems. It is very suggestive that Mr. Maidment's new collection—the last and best of Scottish Ballads and Songs, opens with Hardyknute and Sir Patrick. Whoever wishes to know all the pros and cons of the question, should turn to those two little publications of ten years ago, Mr. Robert Chambers's tract in the Edinburgh Papers, and the reply of Norval Clyne. Victory inclines, we think, to the side of Mr. Chambers. But if so, what then? Is a good ballad the less good for not being old?

There is reason to believe that we owe many of the best ballads of the North of Europe, ancient or modern, to the wit of cultivated women. Of such poems in Denmark, found in manuscripts three hundred years old, Dr. Prior writes, in the introduction to his translation of the Ancient Danish Ballads, "One thing only is pretty clear, that in great part they are the composition of ladies. The manuscripts in which they are preserved are almost every one of them in female handwriting, which alone might lead us to expect that females had composed them." And he adds the reasons from internal evidence, "which justify us in admitting the conclusions to which Oebenschläger, N. M. Petersen, and other Danish critics have arrived, that we are indebted for most of them to the ladies." So it has been, doubtless, with the northern ballads of this country. And there is no reason why it should dishearten us to know that this one of the feminine gifts and graces had not by any means died out at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Nor was it extinct when Lady Nairne wrote The Land of the Leal, or when Lady Barnard wrote Auld Robin Gray. There must be a wrong twist in the way of study that would lead any one to fancy this a grievance.

THERMAL-WATER CURE.

FRANCE, with reason, boasts herself to be one of the most favoured countries in the world. She is so, taking her for all in all; and, amongst her natural advantages, few, either of her citizens or her neighbours, estimate sufficiently the value of her thermal mineral springs. The French government knows, and profits by their virtues. Waters issuing from the earth endowed with

certain qualities, or raised to unusual temperatures, attract, as at Spa and many of the German baths, crowds of visitors, the great majority of whom are flaunting pleasure-seekers, the small majority invalids seriously in search of health. But having seen, at Amélie-les-Bains,* in the department of the Oriental Pyrenees, the Thermal Etablissement Militaire in working trim I wish to give a slight idea, with the help of Dr. Henri Lespiau, of the way in which a great nation treats and nurses the suffering individuals of its army and navy who are likely to be benefitted by such treatment. Everything that is done in the Etablissement Militaire at Amélie is medically based on the supposed efficacy (and on nothing else) of the thermal waters there, which are affirmed to be sovereign for scrofulous, and rheumatic affections, especially when obstinate and of long standing. When a patient (soldier or sailor, officer or private) falls ill with a complaint which does not, or is known not to yield to the influence of the waters, he is sent away to Perpignan, where there is a good military hospital for the treatment of diseases in general, all and sundry.

The great object of the French Government is to procure for its sick and wounded soldiers and sailors the same attentions which they would receive in a family in easy circumstances; and this laudable endeavour is, as near as may be, accomplished in the naval and military hospitals in which acute diseases are treated. Chronic diseases were formerly held to be a sufficient reason for premature discharge from the service. At the present time, soldiers and sailors are enabled to try the beneficial effects of natural mineral waters at their source, the quality of the spring being selected according to the nature of their chronic disease, or their wounds contracted in the service.

Within the last fifteen years, the French minister of war has been put in possession of several thermal establishments in which sailors are received on the same terms as soldiers. Vichy represents the group of alkaline waters; Bourbonne is the station for complaints which require the employment of hot saline springs; Barèges and Amélie-les-Bains are the military posts for thermal sulphureous waters. But the former, which has a magnificent hospital, is high up in the Hautes-Pyrénées, is uninhabited in winter, and enjoys a detestably variable climate in summer. The site,

moreover, is so displeasing that a cheerful person sent there would soon get the blues. Amélie has the advantage of a lower elevation, being only two hundred and twenty metres, or seven hundred and thirty-eight English feet, above the level of the sea. The winters are mild, allowing private individuals to make use of the waters all the year round, although the heats of summer are often great. Consequently, the season of the Etablissement Militaire lasts all the year, with the exception of November, March, and April, the months in which trying weather for invalids (if not actually inclement for persons in health) may be expected. Amélie has also the great advantage of being pleasantly and picturesquely situated.

Soldiers and sailors are sent to Amélie by the respective doctors of their regiment or their ship. Each patient may remain there as long as the doctor thinks fit. This kind and hospitable entertainment is not exactly gratuitous. The inmates of the Etablissement Militaire do not get lodging, board, and medical attendance absolutely for nothing. For instance, from the pay of captains two francs per day is deducted; from that of lieutenants, one franc and a half; but they are maintained exactly as in a well-appointed hotel, at the cost, to the State, of at least seven francs, per officer, per day.

The cooks, gardeners, bath-attendants, &c., employed at the establishment, about one hundred altogether in number, are "infirmiers," that is, soldiers, healthy men, whose respective services are paid. The patients, however slight their ailments or however advanced their recovery, are not called upon to do anything in return for the benefits they receive. Two meals a day is the general allowance for everybody, great and small; only, for convenience sake, the hours are not exactly the same. The officers take their déjeuner (a more substantial meal than an English family breakfast) at half-past nine, and dine at five; the private breakfast, I think, at nine, and dine at half-past four.

The refectories for the men, private soldiers and seamen, are an airy suite of dining rooms communicating with each other by archways instead of doors. They are lighted mainly by borrowed light, which has to traverse an arched corridor; and the windows have outside wooden shutters, as a protection against the excess of heat and glare which may be expected at forty-two degrees of north latitude in summer. The dining tables (on whose outer edge the

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. ii., p. 513.

places of the guests are numbered), are neatly covered with varnished cloth, which admits of almost instantaneous cleaning. The plates for eating from are of pewter, but a white crockery plate fills the office of salt-cellar.

Of course the officers have a dining-room to themselves, which is the mess-room both for army and navy. Three different dishes, varied from day to day, with dessert, form the bill of fare both at breakfast and dinner. They have a salon, or conversation room, and a reading-room containing some five hundred volumes, with a liberal allowance of newspapers and periodicals. Besides their garden square in the centre of the buildings, they have a reserved alley (the lowest one), fronting the road or street, in the vast general recreation-ground.

In this extensive playground the privates amuse themselves with card-playing, loto, bowls, ninepins, and other games of a similar kind. Few seem to occupy themselves with reading. The more ingenious construct miniature mills, illustrative of the various mechanical movements obtainable from a little rill of water which serves to irrigate the plane-trees in the walks. A single bit of string passing round a wheel, which you may magnify in imagination to imposing proportions, causes a sawyer to saw, a woman to churn, a carpenter to plane, and other useful tasks to be performed by the same little wheel-of-all-work. I did not, however, see a sample of the Swiss mode of rocking a cradle by water-power; probably because most of the patients were bachelors, and likely to continue so.

In such an establishment, it will be taken for granted that there is a well-mounted kitchen, a store-room, a consulting room, a pharmacy, and so on, with all the requirements needful both for household and hospital life. The thermes, or apartments destined to the application of hot mineral water in its various forms, are in a separate building, having no connexion with the sleeping and the eating rooms. Here are the piscine, or hot swimming-bath, for the officers, lined with white marble, and a larger one, of less choice materials, for the men. Among many strange contrivances, is a singular instrument, to enable persons afflicted with skin disease on the face, to remain submerged during considerable intervals. The patient closes his nostrils with a pair of spring nippers, stops his ears with wool, and then, after receiving into his mouth a double tube of reeds (*Arundo donax*), weighted at the lower end and

floated at the upper end with cork, sinks in the piscine or in a bath, and remains completely under water for twenty minutes at a time, or longer.

But the most potent medication of all, is applied in the vaporarium, or vapour-bath, where men are steamed alive in such a way that you fancy they would attain the state of boiled chicken if the process were continued a little longer. Ten minutes of this cooking is thought as much as human flesh and blood can bear: after which, each patient, muffled to the eyes in hot wrappers, instantly betakes himself to bed, as the only safe refuge from atmospheric chills. Affections otherwise intractable have yielded to this violent remedy. Soldiers and sailors are not allowed to go out beyond the walls of the establishment and the grounds belonging to it (which are spacious and varied, sloping up a hill-side) without very special leave. One can conceive the consequences, both to themselves and the townsfolk, were they allowed to run backwards and forward, as they pleased. The officers are subject to less restraint; nevertheless, they are expected to present themselves at meal times, and at least consult their doctor respecting an occasional absence. The entrance of the establishment is guarded by a porter's lodge; and any stranger or civilian entering is asked what or whom he wants.

The internal government and the medical service of this thermal hospital are quite distinct. Like everything else in France, both are based on a system of centralisation. At the head of all, is a *sous-intendant militaire*, with the rank of colonel: in whom is centred the administration of the hospital, in which the medical men take no part. The details of provisions, linen, washing, and all housekeeping questions, devolve on, and are superintended by, an *officier comptable*, or account-keeping officer.

At the head of the medical administration is a *médecin principal*, or principal doctor, of the first class, who is physician-in-chief; second to whom are two *médecins principaux*, or principal doctors, of the second class. These are assisted by four *sous aide-majors*, also doctors of medicine. Besides whom, the medical staff includes a *pharmacien* who acts solely as the conservator of the waters, and whose duties are confined to verifying the qualities and the sulphuration of the water. The need for this officer will be shortly explained. Lastly, there is another *pharmacien* or apothecary for the service of the hospital.

The thermal establishment at *Amélie-les-Bains* most frequented by civilians is built

over the springs which supply the mineral waters. But a hospital capable of receiving with comfort four hundred invalid soldiers and sailors, requires *space*, and cannot be built on every rocky spot where a hot spring issues from the ground. Besides sufficient lodgings for the patients, there must be separate buildings for the management, the infirmaries, the bath-rooms, the wash-houses, the chapel, and, above all, spacious grounds, affording the choice of sun and shade, for men confined within walls to walk at pleasure. As might be expected, an obtainable spring was situated on one spot and a sufficiently extensive area of ground at another. The problem was to combine the two.

At the time when the government decided to establish a military hospital at Amélie-les-Bains, its sulphureous springs—there are hot springs there which are not sulphureous—belonged to two proprietors, the Doctors Pujade and Hermabescière, neither of whom was willing to part with the thermal establishments of which they were the respective directors. In the end, Dr. Hermabescière sold to the minister of war, for fifty thousand francs (two thousand pounds) a sulphureous spring, which gives from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and fifty quarts per minute. Taking a mean of one hundred and twenty-five, it supplies some ninety thousand quarts in the four-and-twenty hours: which is amply sufficient for a large number of bathers. This spring being a kilomètre (four furlongs and two hundred and thirteen yards) away from the site selected for the hospital, and on the other side of the ravine down which the torrent Mondony rushes, it was decided to convey the thermal waters across the ravine in air-tight pipes, by means of an aqueduct. This aqueduct forms a handsome foot-bridge, which commands a cheerful and picturesque view in whichever direction you cast your eyes. Some people wonder why the bridge was not made wider, to allow the passage of carriages, and mistakenly attribute its narrowness to the selfishness or exclusiveness of the military authorities. But the fact is, that the vibration caused by the passage of heavy loads over the aqueduct, would very speedily dislocate its joints and produce a leak.

The utility of the appointment of a pharmacien conservator will now be evident; because if, by accident, the waters lose their peculiar sulphureous and other qualities, the course of treatment is then no more than a mere case of hot-water cure. This did actually happen during a certain space of time, in consequence of an escape of gas

and a leakage of water from the pipes. At its source, the water has a temperature of seventy-seven degrees Réaumur, not far below the boiling point. It loses five degrees R. during its passage; that is, it reaches the hospital at seventy-two degrees R. This temperature is much higher than is required for any mode of thermal treatment. Consequently, a portion of it is cooled by causing the pipe which contains it to pass through a current of water obtained from the torrent.

Amélie's first step towards its present importance was due to Marshal Comte Castellanne, who for a considerable time commanded the military division whose head-quarters are at Perpignan. During the campaigns of the first Empire, he had contracted rheumatism which caused him great suffering, and he took the opportunity of an inspection at Amélie to try a few sulphureous baths. The result of the experiment was so satisfactory that he strongly urged the minister of war to institute a thermal military hospital in this locality, which was then called Bains d'Arles, after the commune of which it formed a part. But through the general's influence, it was raised to the dignity of a separate commune, under the title of Amélie-les-Bains, after Louis Philippe's estimable queen. This name it is likely to retain, in spite of dynastic changes.

The military hospital was inaugurated on the 1st of July, 1854. It is capable of containing four hundred patients. There is talk of building a separate pavilion for general officers. The thermes comprise every hydropathic appliance known to medical science at the present day. Although the men use one compartment and the officers another, and the latter is more luxurious in its fittings, the whole treatment is precisely the same for both. All the inmates are medically equal in the presence of disease and death.

TWILIGHT.

DRIFT little snowflakes 'mid the shells,
Break little waves among the pebbles,
Rise little notes in dulcet swells,
And faint again in silver trebles.
The hot sun stoops, and dips and dips
His burning brow to drowsy numbers,
Then kisses red the ocean's lips,
And sinks away to golden slumbers.
Come, twilight, with thy purple breath,
And freshen all the drooping willows;
The water-lilies faint to death,
The bending reeds, the fevered billows!
And beckon forth the timid stars,
To tread the cool dew-drooping heaven,
And quickly let the burning bars
That bind the impatient sea be riven.

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And bring thy breeze, with soothing wing,
Around my heated brows to flutter,
And teach the waves more sad to sing,
More yearning mysteries to utter.

Come gliding softly from the east,
Come, breathing over distant cities,
And crown the hills with holy rest,
And fill the winds with plaintive ditties.

A SWISS SONG-FESTIVAL.

ON an August morning, as unlike as possible to the rainy one on which we started by special train for Brixlegg a year ago,* we found ourselves on the shores of the beautiful lake of Lucerne, prepared to assist at another and a very different exhibition. It was a singular chance which had brought all the members of our party together as witnesses of a popular national performance, precisely a twelvemonth after the date of the Passion Play at Brixlegg, to the day.

On our first arrival in Lucerne, we observed that the town was gaily decorated with streaming flags of many colours, and with triumphal arches, and pillars twined tastefully with evergreens, at the head of every principal street.

In answer to our inquiries we learned that on the following day (Sunday), there was to be held a "Cantonal Singing Festival" (Kantonal Sängerfest) in Lucerne: the invited choirs were to be received with all sorts of honours by the local authorities; were to be marched in procession through the streets; and, after the concert, were to be entertained with meat and drink in a spacious temporary dining-hall erected for the occasion on the shore of the lake.

The picturesque town was alive and bright with anticipation of, and preparations for, the morrow's festival, as we strolled about it on the Saturday afternoon. Lucerne was full of foreign tourists; chiefly British and Americans. The vast hotels swarmed with guests; the steam-boats on the lake were crowded; every train brought fresh additions to the already inconveniently large number of temporary dwellers in the place. But these were not the persons who were interested in the forthcoming performance. Bond-street and Broadway were both amply represented on the Swiss lake shores, but they were apparently far more interested in the International Chignon-show, to be seen on the fashionable promenade, than in what was causing considerable excitement and pleased

anticipation amongst the native population.

From eighteen different towns and villages, of which Zurich was incomparably the most important, choirs were sent to compete against each other. When to these were added the Lucerne Cecilia Society, and Liedertafel, their united numbers became very considerable.

After having wandered through the principal streets, and looked at all the arches and garlands and inscriptions, we made our way to the Fest-hütte. This was a large building of pine-wood, little more than a colossal shed, in truth, but very prettily and tastefully decorated with evergreens and banners.

In the Fest-hütte the dinner was to be given to the united choirs after the concert; and, notwithstanding the simplicity of the materials, it would be difficult to imagine a prettier dining-hall, or one more thoroughly adapted to the special occasion for which it was intended. The side of it which faced the lake was not boarded in. The wide intervals between the wooden pillars supporting the roof were left open, giving to view the delicious panorama of the lake, with the opposite shore, and the long, quaint, covered bridge running obliquely from one side to the other. The two ends of the Fest-hütte were also open; but the one long wall that was entirely closed in, was tapestried from roof to floor with fragrant greenery. Pine-branches, ivy, flag-grass, and fresh velvety moss, woven together so as to present an unbroken surface, made a very appropriate arras for this rustic banquet-hall. Long narrow tables and benches were ranged in order, along the floor. At the head of each table was hung a placard inscribed with the name of one of the competing choirs, together with the date of the year in which that choir obtained the victory in the annual trial of musical skill. Above, was a balcony overhung with banners; and here the musicians were to be stationed. Throughout the dinner a local band was to perform at intervals, and there was to be some part-singing also.

The preparations were by no means completed at a pretty late hour on Saturday afternoon. Busy men and women thronged in and out of the Fest-hütte, bearing green branches and garlands, tables, benches, plates and dishes, and whole armies of bottles: which latter were disposed in long array upon the ground. Lucerne (it must be understood that we speak of the native population) was busy up to an unusually

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, First Series, VOL. XX., p. 397.

late hour that night: that is to say, a little beyond the time at which London, in the season, begins to spend its evening. The windows of our bedrooms looked into a narrow, populous street, and some zealous Lucernese, anxious to make a good figure in the festival, were practising part-songs under them, nearly all night. The last sound that saluted our drowsy ears was a long-drawn, rich, tremulous chord, formed by a combination of various kinds of human voice.

The weather, proverbially inimical to popular merry-makings, cleared up most favourably: and, after a long period of rain and cold winds, the 22nd of August rose brilliantly. We islanders are apt to imagine that we have a monopoly of the caprices and ill-humours of the Clerk of the Weather, and that he bestows his sweetness on continental nations with persistent constancy. But they have their share of his gloomy moods: witness the frequent exclamations of pleasure and surprise regarding the fitness of the day, which we heard from all sorts of wayfarers in the streets.

The concert was to take place in the church of St. Xavier. We were told that the building was no longer used for divine service, but for this we cannot vouch. Between breakfast-time and one o'clock, at which hour the concert commenced, we amused ourselves by strolling about the streets and along the shores of the lake. The whole town now presented a very animated spectacle. Crowds of singers arrived at the railway station, and by the steamboats. These were accompanied in most cases by troops of friends who perambulated the streets in their holiday clothes. National costume is dying out like the oyster. Very faint traces of it linger here and there in remote corners of the Continent. Lucerne, it is needless to say, is not a remote corner of the Continent; and the attire of its inhabitants is, with almost imperceptibly slight modification, that of Paris or London, Florence or Vienna. Still, a few of the peasants who had come from their obscure villages to assist at the Sängerfest retained somewhat of the national dress. It was very observable that the women clung with much greater tenacity to the old costume than the men.

The most distinctive costume that met our eyes, was worn by women who appeared to be the wives and daughters of respectable farmers. It consisted of a rather short black petticoat, a full bodice

of some rich colour—claret and purple predominated—and a square stomacher over this, stiffened in a manner which gave a singularly ungainly look to the figure. The stomacher was attached to the under bodice by a complicated arrangement of silver chains and clasps, set in some instances with jewels. The materials of the dress were in most cases very good; in some, costly. One portly sunburnt woman wore a skirt of the finest black merino, and an under bodice and sleeves of rich purple velvet. Her stomacher was of black velvet; and her chains and clasps were of massive silver, adorned with precious stones. A black straw-hat covered her head, and her hair hung down in two long plaits on her shoulders. But by the side of this picturesque figure walked a broad, round-shouldered man, with the lumbering gait common to rustics, and dressed very much as a London mechanic would be dressed on a Sunday.

Group after group of men passed us, all wearing a broad band of ribbon round the left arm, or a huge breast-knot. These were the members of the choirs. Occasionally there hurried by, an individual with a silken scarf tied across his shoulder and under one arm. Such a scarf! Crimson, or yellow, or blue, and edged with a silver fringe. We all agreed that nothing so gorgeous had ever been seen out of a stage procession. The wearers of these conspicuous decorations were members of the central committee, or of the select committee of the provincial choirs. One young gentleman assisted the effect of his crimson, silver-fringed scarf, by wearing a blue neck-tie, and white kid gloves. He presented quite a dazzling spectacle in the sunshine. As the hour of performance drew near, the stream of people making for the church of St. Xavier became denser. Perfect order and good humour prevailed in the crowd. The price of places varied from fifty centimes up to two francs. The best seats were those in the body of the church; the galleries being considered inferior. Very quickly the building grew full; before the concert began, it was densely crowded.

The sound of an approaching band was heard without. The choirs were arriving in procession. All at once the great organ struck up a pompous march, and as the notes rolled and shook and thundered through the building, a sudden flash of bright colour was seen at the further end of it, and there were carried in huge

waving banners that seemed to fill the whole space with movement as they were borne slowly up the aisle. These were the standards of the competing choirs, headed by the cantonal banner of Lucerne; they were finally deposited solemnly in the high carved pulpit, and were so arranged as to resemble a colossal fan of many colours. Then the singers were marshalled in. They were ranged on a broad, solid platform, sloping gently upward from the spectators. All the choirs, with the exception of the Cecilia Society and Liedertafel of Lucerne, who did not compete, but merely sang on a kind of hospitable and friendly footing, entered at once, and stood on the platform during the whole performance. As it came to the turn of each choir to sing, its members advanced a little and stood in a semicircle facing the audience. In the centre of the semicircle thus formed, was placed the conductor of the choir. In several cases the numbers of the choir (drawn from some tiny village) were so limited, that it was evident not one voice could be spared. And then the conductor beat the time with one hand, held his music with the other, and lustily swelled the body of sound with lungs which, if occasionally indiscreetly zealous, were invariably sound and strong.

The performance commenced with a Festgruss (festal greeting) sung by the Liedertafel of Lucerne. The singers were stationed, not on the platform, but in the organ-loft: so that they faced their guests, and were thus manifestly addressing *them*, rather than the general audience.

It is not our aim to write a musical criticism; and we shall therefore refrain from any attempt to decide on the respective merits of the competitors. One or two of the choirs were so immeasurably superior to the others, as to leave no room for discussion. As a mere musical performance, the whole concert was decidedly below the average mark of such exhibitions either in Germany or England. But it was impossible to look on it from a solely artistic point of view. The mere aspect of the singers suggested a thousand interesting considerations and errant fancies. Face after face met our eyes, homely, weather-beaten, coarse-featured, ugly, but breathing of open air and scorching sun and keen mountain blasts. How many a winter's night, when the thick white snow hushed every footfall, and frost made the wild torrents dumb, had the pine-built chalet vibrated to the sound of rustic voices,

singing and soaring, and sending out circles of sound into the blanched mountain wilderness, even as the fire and lamp sent forth rays of light from the uncurtained casements! On how many a spring-tide morn and summer evening, had the music of Mendelssohn, and Mozart, and Schubert, echoed along the mountain pastures, whilst the tinkling cowbells and bubbling streams made a subdued accompaniment to the sweet part-songs!

The words of the part-songs did not harp on many varied strings; but they were all healthy in tone. Many of them were highly poetical. The chords chiefly appealed to, were patriotism and love of nature. There were also, of course, several love ditties. But in each of these the writer expressed a vivid sympathy with, and admiration for, stars, and flowers, and forests, and wild birds; and made the landscape take the colour of his mood, according as his wooing were gay and prosperous, or sad and pensive.

The numbers of each separate choir varied from a dozen—or, probably, in some cases, fewer—up to thirty or forty voices.

From Grütli, where the famous oath was sworn; from Altdorf, where Tell shot the apple (our belief in which apple we are resolved that no accumulation of human testimony shall shake); from Zurich, proud of her fair lake-mirror; from many and many a hamlet, whose very name would be strange in the ears of English readers; the singers had been gathered together.

One after the other the choirs stood forward and sang, gaining more or less applause.

An incident occurred which is worth recording, and which may be considered touching or comic, according to the reader's point of view. Ettiswil (can that appalling school-boy who knows everything, oblige us with the exact latitude and longitude of Ettiswil?), poor little Ettiswil, was represented by the smallest of all the choirs. Mere peasants, hard-handed, and weather-tanned, they stepped out from the crowd on the platform, and ranged themselves in a half-circle to sing. Their conductor was a sanguine-complexioned eager man, boiling over with zeal and energy. He was also—and this proved to be unfortunate—the principal tenor of the troupe. The piece they had selected was a part-song, "Evening-shine in the Woods," by Schmöller, and it contained a few bars of solo for the first tenor. What with his zeal, and the heat, and the exertion of directing the time with his

strong energetically waving arm, the poor conductor had not his voice so much under command as might have been desired. Without going intolerably out of tune, the pitch fell, and fell. And at the end of the piece the whole choir was flat, and Ettiswil received but a faint and feeble tribute of applause. Still it had not been a disgraceful failure. Other choirs were flat. The thing might be borne.

But, behold, when Zurich comes forward at the very end of the list, Zurich also sings, "Evening-shine in the Woods," by Schmölzer! Zurich sends no hard-handed herdsmen or farmers. Zurich is represented by superior persons in black satin waist-coats and gold spectacles! (The preponderance of spectacles, by-the-way, in the entire mass of performers, is remarkable.) Zurich is thirty strong, or so. Zurich boasts a conductor who has nothing to do but conduct. Lastly, Zurich possesses a tenor, slim, black-haired, gentleman-like, and with an exquisitely true and sympathetic voice! And just this very Zurich, with its incontestable and overwhelming advantages, must needs pitch upon the identical part-song of tiny, rustic Ettiswil, and invite invidious comparisons!

It is hard. It is almost cruel. But when Zurich has sung (and sung, it must be said, very admirably), and is recalled vociferously to repeat the strain, who so hearty, who so rapturous, who so unfeignedly delighted as the men of Ettiswil?

It was almost pathetic; the thing was so unmistakably genuine. Hand-clappings may easily be insincere. Shouts of approbation are not necessarily loyal in proportion to their loudness. But the rapt attention, the honest pleasure, the unconscious self-forgetting smiles on those coarse-featured faces, could not be simulated. No doubt Ettiswil was sorry to be beaten; but equally without doubt was it, that Ettiswil heartily admired its victorious rivals, and enjoyed their skill.

It was curious to observe, both in the instance of Zurich, and in that of the Cecilia Society of Lucerne, how mental and social culture, if it did not improve physical gifts, at least rendered the use of them so certain and masterful, as to surpass without an effort the attempts at competition of the mere material animal. The men of Zurich were lawyers, doctors, clerks, tradesmen: men who passed many hours in sedentary occupation, shut up within the walls of a town. The men of Ettiswil were herdsmen, ploughmen, farmers: men who imbibed

pure oxygen from morning to night: who rose with the lark and couched with the lamb. And yet compare the voices of the two choirs. The Zurich voices were full, resonant, true. The Ettiswil voices were rough, hard, uncertain.

Again: the "mixed choir" of Huttwil, consisting half of men, half of women, was naturally compared with the Cecilia Society of Lucerne; also composed of equal numbers of male and female singers. The women of Huttwil were mere peasants. They wore the sort of costume already described; black petticoat, velvet bodice, silver chains, and the rest. The female Cecilians were—we do not know with accuracy the social status of the pleasing-looking young ladies who sang on this occasion, but it may at least be said without offence or fear of contradiction, that they, one and all, led domestic, quiet, household lives. Listen to the two. Huttwil does not sing out of tune; but it is harsh, screamy, and *worn* in tone. Yes: truly, *worn*. Do you seek for freshness, roundness, purity of quality? You will find these charming characteristics in the throats of the white-muslined, kid-gloved town maidens; not in those of the dwellers on upland pastures, or by the margin of sweet waters where the daintiest airs of heaven bring the souls of flowers on their impalpable wings.

The contest is over. We strangers have no means of ascertaining to whom the palm of victory is awarded; but we all leave St. Xavier, declaring that if Zurich be not triumphant, it ought to be.

The crowd pours out of the church. The organ sounds joyfully. The great fan in the pulpit is resolved into its component parts, and the banners flutter out at the portal. The brass band strikes up, and the choirs are marched in procession through the town again.

Later in the evening we cross to the opposite side of the lake to that on which the Fest-hütte stands, and stroll dreamily along. A glorious mellow August sun shines down over the magnificent panorama. Alp over Alp transfigured with the splendours of the dying day, melt in the distance into ethereal, cloud-like shapes of snow, rose-tinted. Village windows flame redly from beneath their beetling gables. The level sunbeams pierce thick forest foliage with their burnished javelins; and the reaches of green meadow stretching softly into the lake, are touched with gold, and glow with the peculiar hue of some lustrous Indian beetle.

Presently the moon rises, large and round, leaning her breast against the sharp black peak of a jagged pile of rock. Then a yellow train of brightness shimmers on the blue waters. On the dark flank of Pilatus, a crimson beacon light flames up, looking lurid in the gloom of the mountain's mighty shadow. Belated rowers quicken the rhythmicplash of their oars, and snatches of song are borne landward by the evening breeze; which carries also the ineffably sweet breath of mountain pastures and newly-mown hay. In the distance, close down to the water's edge, so that shadow and substance show like one point of brightness, gleams the Fest-hütte, all ablaze with lights. It seems a splendid jewel, scintillating as the slight wind touches its flickering jets of flame.

Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!

How they shout! But the distance and the water sweeten and soften the sound.

Then breaks forth a jubilant strain: "For God, Freedom, and Fatherland!" The full notes are wafted across the placid lake. The amber moon soars up over the rocks; away from the jagged point that pierced her. She looks peaceful in her azure heights, as though a black earth-shadow had never darkened her purity. And thus the last song dies away in the distance.

"For God, Freedom, and Fatherland!"

A DEFENCE OF THE NOVEL.

A RESPECTED correspondent, whose interest has been strongly kindled in the matter of the amicable controversy carried on in our columns between the *Vindicator of Prose* and the *Apologist for Verse*,* has done us the honour to suggest the Necessity for the Novel as a desirable theme for discussion. Assuredly the subject is one for serious consideration, and not without bearing on the present state and prospects of society; it has also many relations both with prose and verse. Long ere the former was employed in composition, whether written or oral; long ere states were founded, or even society formed; the culture of nations was dependent on what we should now call nursery tales, or rather on similar stories which the more learned have since relegated to the nursery, and stupidly banished from their libraries. Long ere the *Vēdas* were written or Arabian

traditions spoken; long before the earliest theogonies or cosmogonies, the mythical fable, or the Homeric poem; the lessons of wisdom were preserved in the family narrative, which, in its transition from parent to child, attained a rhythmical flow, a tuneful cadence, a manner of speech that, as a poet tells us, was "far above singing." Fortunately these domestic utterances were unrestricted, while those of a more public character, falsely supposed to be more important, were sacredly guarded. If any other than a Brahmin were to have dared to read the *Vēdas* or to hear them read, boiling oil would have been poured into his ears; but full liberty was allowed to the popular lore, and it might be spoken or listened to gladly and without fear by the simple and the vulgar. Gradually losing its private application, it became the parable, brief in form but pregnant in results, and gathering importance as it travelled onward. Such "household words" circulate from clime to clime. Anon, we find them developing themselves, with additions, into allegories and types, and embellishing themselves with metaphors, similes, and emblems. They finally came down into the latest time as well-dressed episodes in elaborate epics, or startling incidents in the sensational romance.

As soon as these narratives assumed the dignity of art, they were seized on by the poetic spirit of the early time and clothed in the attire of verse. Greece and India both present us with examples of great but not equal excellence, alike admirable as works of imagination, but differing much in spirit and in form. Fantastical and indeterminate in its material, the method of the Indian epic becomes measureless and formless, or mean and contracted. Greek art is the opposite of this, being remarkable for its subjection to rule and its agreement with reason. It gains in beauty what it may lose in sublimity. The introduction of history and prose brought it to a lower level. The heroes had become imperfect men even in Euripides, but with the historical Ionian the human varieties are numberless. Herodotus can even afford to be sceptical, and Thucydides abounds in individual types which admit of free criticism, whether for their virtues or their errors, their merits or their defects. Sometimes during meals a story-teller would be permitted to feed the mind also by means of some long yarn, full of wonder and sentiment: a custom which still prevails in the East. As in

* See *ALL THE YEAR ROUND*, New Series, vol. i., p. 346; vol. ii., p. 65.

philosophy the mind of man advanced from the abstractions of Plato into the realisms of Aristotle, so in time these public reciters preferred the familiar themes of ordinary life, delivered in rhythmical prose, to the epic sublimities which had required the gorgeous apparel of verse. In this manner the prose-romance came, by a chain of natural causes, into existence, and finally substituted the stricter form of composition. When Athens ceased to be the capital and mistress of the literary world the forms of literature underwent considerable change, and its subject-matter became more miscellaneous in its character; both were more popular and adapted themselves to meaner capacities, alike in relation to author and reader. Such is the natural current of thought; like a great river it has its source in elevated places, but in its flow it seeks the valleys and lower regions of created development. Thus for the lofty apogees of classical writers were substituted such parables as we find in the New Testament, consisting of simple elements and dealing with familiar transactions, addressing the humble-minded and finding a ready reception with erring but contrite natures.

The new developments of mind thus induced have been extraordinary in their character and influence. They have initiated a tendency by which the human intellect has been unspeakably elevated and the interests of science and literature immeasurably advanced. It promoted and finally accomplished a mighty mental revolution, opening wider and more extensive channels of thought, imparting keener sensibility to the feelings of the heart, and giving ample scope to all the nobler energies of man.

The history of modern literature has followed much the same course. The Roman mind, as compared with the Grecian, represented a tendency to the useful rather than to the beautiful, and contained the latter as far as possible within the limits of the former. It was decidedly sensuous, and in its descent from the intellectual to the practical, preferred a style and a language less difficult than belonged to the more ancient models. Out of this grew a new tongue and a new literature. Latin was transformed into Italian, and the poet into a romancer. The popular dialect became that of literature, and a new race of writers commenced a new era.

Even in the earlier period, as we may

easily perceive by reference to Anthon's *Cyropaedia*, what they named history we should now call historical romance. When at length history proper was confined within stricter limits, when memory was substituted for imagination, and facts, however scanty, were regarded as of more value than fancies, however profuse and ornamental, a newer form of the old romance became needful to fill a waste place in the mind which had been accustomed to be entertained with epic narrative in verse or inventive episode in historical prose, but was now left to seek for amusement of a like kind in less difficult forms of composition. Passing, then, from the incidents of the Peloponnesian war, the adventures of Cyrus, and the retreat of the Ten Thousand, the general mind required a culture suitable to less heroical conditions, which at length was fully satisfied under the form of the modern novel.

This downward tendency of all the forms of literature has been sometimes stigmatised as a degradation, and many an author, as was the case with Euripides, undervalued in consequence. Assuredly there is some mistake in these rash judgments. The sun at first shines on the hill-tops, but as he advances towards noonday his light penetrates the slopes and the valleys and illuminates the lowest levels of creation. Modern fiction, by adapting its tales to the meanest capacities, shows that it has attained a loftier station of command and a larger comprehension of possible results. At the same time it is proved equal to the most subtle varieties of human intellect in the course of its development, whether social or individual; and the metaphysical novel is nearly as frequent as the sensational, in the present age of innovation, when small regard is paid to convention, and a latitude allowed to thought beyond that of any previous age.

The progress of the human mind, therefore, renders necessary those modern forms of fiction in which daring speculation and familiar occurrences mingle together so as to suit every phase of mental and moral growth, and thereby reflect the ever changing states of an advanced period of society, possessing more knowledge and enjoying more freedom than any preceding time could boast of. Poetry even has to do this, albeit addressing those higher-class minds that live as much in the past as in the present, and has to venture into regions of description and thought where criticism follows it unwillingly and frequently reproachfully, amazed at its audacity and

dreading the danger looming in the future. The novelist, addressing the less reflective, and endeavouring to paint "the manners living as they rise," is compelled by his audience to take special note of the actual stage of the progress attained by the contemporaneous and active life which is surging about him on every hand, and soliciting recognition in every possible shape, however strange and difficult of estimation by the canons of judgment hitherto acknowledged. The novel must deal with the newest, and is accordingly very often merely tentative equally in its subject-matter and its treatment; showing in this as much difference from the classical as the classical does from the wilder examples of Indian literature. Both efficient and final causes, equally living and interacting, are continually working to evolve from all manner of complications some original element that may show the literary mind of the present to be really as creative as that of the past. We must all of us feel that there is a mighty stir and striving everywhere constraining us to new and daring effort, and teeming with extraordinary births, in which the passions of the heart and the conclusions of the reason will enter into sweet and bitter conflict, in order to their ultimate reconciliation in an improved and more permanent order of things, but with which perhaps the future world will be as little satisfied as the present is with existing arrangements. But as the past was forced onward until it united itself with yesterday and to-day, so must we yield still to the constant pressure which urges us into the presence of the coming morrow, and our literature in all its forms must bear the marks of the same necessity, on every page of the countless volumes which testify to its inexhaustible fertility.

HIS LITTLE WAYS.

NOTWITHSTANDING that, since the period at which I first accosted the reader in these pages, grey has something mingled with our younger brown, it may not be wholly without interest to the fairer portion of my friends to mention, incidentally, that I am still an unsnared being, a bright old bachelor, still faithful to my principles of freedom, still, with the combined decision and courtesy with which one honours, and repels, the efforts of a persevering foe, resisting eligible opportunities of parting with that blessing. Urbane, but inexor-

able, I really know no man who more thoroughly appreciates the charming qualities of the other sex, or cherishes a deeper sentiment of gratitude for the still greater blessings he had sometimes believed them not unwilling to confer. Cordially recognising the sagacious provision that proposals should proceed from *our* side, I feel that I must else not only have long since exhausted all acknowledged forms of negative, but that the perpetual demand upon one's best and tenderest sympathies must have seriously affected my nervous system, and terminated in—say sciatica, if nothing worse.

I would not, for worlds, be considered to speak disrespectfully of the married state. Very, very far from it. I have a positive predilection for matrimonial life, provided I do not share it, and look round upon the ever-increasing circle of its victims with something of that feeling, mournful, indeed, yet tender and humanising, with which one gazes on the sick and wounded in some mighty hospital.

I have even a little gallery in my house, sacred to their manes. Under each sad-eyed portrait, with its forced, quivering smile, and, not unfrequently, that "tamed" look never seen in cage-born animals of the fiercer kind, appears the date of the unfortunate fellow's birth and exec—marriage, I mean—and I am sensible of few things more gratifying than to sit, smoking (poor lads! *you* never smoked) in your midst, to remember that if you fell easily, you bore it nobly, and to think that, but for a too ostentatious embracing of your chains, you might have passed for happy men.

One of you (yes, Balaam Burkemyoung, b. 1687, m. 1715, you may well try to disarm me with that deprecating gaze), carried hypocrisy to the extent of marrying three wives! Of the first, history is mute. Between the two last, you lie buried. In the interesting bas-relief commemorating that circumstance, you are turning your back to the one, and bestowing your undivided attention on the other. Balaam, this is suggestive. Is it—can it be two to one that you were not a happy spouse?

Charley Wing, dear old boy, your wink is a transparent humbug. It is not worth one dump. That look, recalled with difficulty for deceitful ends, belongs to an earlier and happier period of your existence. You had been dead three years (to freedom) when, at the command of your

sovereign, Mrs. Wing, you smirked for this effigy! My friend, I consecrate this sip of grog to the joyous memories of our bachelorhood. No man was louder in praise of that blest condition than yourself. In the very act of exulting over a fallen brother, whist! your foot slipped, and you vanished over the dizzy precipice, with Sibyl Greathed of the Grange.

John Adolphus Burkemyoung Parfitt (b. 1789, m. 1830) it is my painful duty to pass upon you the severest sentence in my power to award. Convicted on the clearest evidence, your marriage certificate, of two offences of the highest class—treason, sir, and perjury—forgetful of your own voluntary vow that nothing should induce you to marry, you deserted the ranks of bachelorhood upon the merest provocation. Life's battle, sir, had hardly begun, when you, unhappy man, incited by one Agnes Heckstetter Williamson, of Scarborough, Yorkshire, Spinster, withdrew precipitately to the rear, and were heard of no more. You are hung, sir, well hung (light from the left), and may you be as happy as you don't deserve!

Philip Bamstead (b. 1800, m. much regretted, 1821), tender years recommend to mercy only when accompanied by the weakness and instability incident to youth. You fell in love, young sir, at seventeen. Four years were allotted you for reflection and repentance. In vain. On the day you came of age, you married. Human depravity—I cannot trust myself to speak. A baronet of my acquaintance, Sir Peter Teazle, has sagaciously remarked that certain marriages are crimes that bring their own punishment. You were a grandfather at forty!

And now, Tom Burkemyoung, the younger, "What shall I say to *thee*, Lord Scrope?" Friend of my youth, I knew thee, and that there was, in thy whole composition, not love enough to stir the soul of a flea. Had I been inquired of, by cynic, what man is safe? I should have unhesitatingly replied "Tom. Tom Burkemyoung." To do you justice, however, you practised no deceit or perfidy. The woman does not breathe who shall taunt you with broken vows. Tom lost everything he possessed, and very considerably more, through the sudden dissolution of the Universal Starch and Stucco Company. Comprehending at one glance his position, Tom put himself up for sale. "My reserved price," avowed the frank, handsome fellow, "is two hundred thousand, fifty down." He was bought by Mrs. Curwig, widow of the emi-

nent broker, the mark of whose honoured head, against his favourite pillar in the Stock Exchange, is still pointed out to new comers with pride and emotion. "Sic stabat Curwig" was to have been inscribed over the spot he had abandoned for another, where time-bargains are no more, but a brother magnate of the 'Change having declared that he, for one, would not "stab at" the memory of his old friend, the idea was prudently relinquished. Tom, old boy, health to you, and resignation. I salute you.

After all (this is first-rate 'baccy), after all, my suffering souls, I have not touched upon the worst of your condition. You remind me of the metamorphosed kings in Circe's palace. You were once men. You sank into husbands, from thence you degenerated into sires. In this moral decrepitude, you received the ironical title of "governor," your gubernatorial functions being, in many cases, expressly restricted to the forking out of cash.

Your case, my worthy things, is hopeless. Man's growing wisdom has greatly facilitated the cheaply and expeditiously getting rid of wives. But with your offspring the matter is different. The law of England, like a benevolent grandmother, adopts both parties, and, for a certain period, compels the satisfactory fulfilment of those functions you assumed with the honorary title above referred to.

Right you are, my excellent creatures, to adapt yourselves to uncontrollable circumstances; but the forced exultation under which you strive to conceal your disgrace is transparent to the (bachelor) friends who love you. Humbling is it to witness the first feeble efforts of some hero of fifty fields, to control the struggles of that formless dab of humanity he styles his "son!" Melancholy, indeed, is the spectacle of a man whose glowing pen has moved the social world, accosting his first-born as topsy-mopsy-wocums! It seems like a grotesque and horrible dream, begotten of German sausage and lager beer, that I once surprised an individual whose poems have been translated into sundry European tongues, entertaining his tyrant-baby with a lyric whose concluding lines are burned into my memory, to this effect:

Shim-sham paradiddle marabona ting-tang—
Bigidum bulladigm ky me.

Tears gather in my eyes as I pen these unforgotten words! I will pay one hundred pounds to any individual who will lessen

the pang by proving to me that they are susceptible of any rational explanation. "Ky me" (whatever they may mean) if I will not!

Is it not enough that the dawning reason should be bewildered with such lights as these? Must it be wantonly misled? It is my belief that your baby begins to *think* reason long before its teachers condescend to talk it. My infantine common-sense revolted, I remember, against the suggestion that I should hush-a-by on a tree-top, when not only was there a secure and comfortable nursery at hand, but a very serious mishap likely to ensue were the former proposition adopted.

Again: that "Burkemyoung" does not rhyme with "hunting" I hold to be an insufficient apology for addressing me as "bunting;" nor does the prospect of being wrapped up in a rabbit-skin offer sufficient attractions to atone for such unfaithful teaching.

Is it imagined that children are born without ears? An error. I knew a young lady who, at four years old, indignantly resisted the attempt in Jack and Jill, to reconcile "water" and "after," and always held to the improved transatlantic reading :

Jack fell down and broke his crown,
And, if Jill didn't—she oughter.

From these, among many examples of a similar nature, I am led to infer that there is something in the care of babies highly debilitating to the intellectual man. Consequently, to delegate the education of this, perhaps inevitable, nuisance, to the sex whose mental progress threatens to become unhealthfully rapid, may be the best for all parties.

I myself have studiously held aloof, and, with one fearful exception, recorded some while since in these pages, have never, that I wot of, been in direct communication with any baby living. It was, therefore, not without serious mental disturbance that I received a letter from my niece Mattie, married and residing abroad, referring to a rash promise on my part to come and see her first-born son, whenever that astonishing phenomenon should be revealed.

"Aware, dear," continued this saucy letter, "of your partiality for little trots, I have not been in a hurry to remind you of your promise; but, now, darling Babs is quite a little man" (he was about two-and-a-half), "so come you must. I do

assure you, uncle, he is not a common child. (If he *had* been, my curiosity would for once have been powerfully excited!)

"He has a hooked nose, like papa, and the richest little baritone voice. His desire to see his godpapa is quite touching." (This remark merely proves into what extremes the naturally truthful mind may be betrayed by enthusiasm.) "The moment he heard you were expected" (So!) "he began saving up his bits of sugar, and would have been equally generous with regard to his magnesia, but *that* circumstance forbade! If you could only see him tearing his little cradle curtains—destructive darling, *that* he is!" (I could almost hear the kiss that accompanied this tribute.) "Or screaming and splashing in his little bath! O dear, dear! won't you be delighted with his little ways!"

Ha! Crumbs of comfort! My godson's ways were little. If ways of some sort be unavoidable, the smaller they run the better. A hooked nose, ha? I don't think I ever saw a Jewish baby; but, with infants of my own persuasion, the little dab of putty which represents the early stage of that organ, simply expresses indecision as to the form it will eventually adopt. Let us, however, hope that the curved beak fore-shadows greatness; at all events, that decision of character and self-control which (see Julius Cæsar, Arthur, Duke of Wellington, Sir Henry Morgan, the buccaneer, and others) qualify men to be successful *leaders* of men. As touching the quality of my godson's voice, that must, for the present remain a mystery, a shriek in baritone conveying to my mind no more distinct idea than that of a railway whistle with a cold.

My journey, as luck would have it, was made in company of an interesting young gentleman about my godson's years. There was something contraband, so to speak, in the manner in which he had been introduced into the carriage. At all events, it was only when we were fairly under way, and escape impossible, that he was suddenly born, as it were, from a basket that seemed to contain nothing but innocent lace, and announced his presence with a querulous squall that might have served for a signal to the next station. The pretty little mamma who, with a nurse, occupied the adjacent seats, apologised so sweetly for the—no doubt, to *her*—melodious disturbance, that I felt I could do no less than express myself as rather gratified, than otherwise, at the prospect of our journey being enlivened by such strains.

"You are fond of the pets, if I am not mistaken?" remarked my fair fellow-traveller, archly.

I bowed assent. "Pet" is a general term, and I have no aversion to a good bull-terrier.

"And I am sure," she added, more sweetly still, "they like *you*."

My heart stood still. A dew rose on my forehead. What if I were expected to caress the little abomination?

"How he fixes his pretty eyes upon you! It is quite curious, how quickly they recognise their friends!"

If an intense desire to fling its object out of the window be indicative of friendship, I gave this infant credit for its penetration. Snatching the opportunity, when mamma's eyes were for a moment averted, I returned the child's stare with a look that might have cowed a rhinoceros. But the result disappointed my expectations. The terrified howl I had elicited was interpreted as a desire to go to the kind gentleman who was smiling so amiably from the opposite seat. This, however, the infant, for its own private reasons, at once declined, thereby enabling me to display, with safety, an amount of disappointment that completely won the confidence of both mamma and nurse.

Upon the whole, this was a fortunate meeting. Here, I thought, was a splendid opportunity of learning a little baby talk and general management which would prove invaluable in defence against my godson. Not to be tedious—before our little party separated, I had, by unwearied observation and a little judicious questioning, acquired all the needful rudiments of babiology. Although not qualified to maintain a fluent conversation, I felt that I could make myself generally understood. If incompetent to deal with unforeseen and critical incidents, I could answer for a certain self-possession in the presence of most. In cases demanding prompt action, I felt sure that my course, if somewhat rough, would be effectual. I knew which end of a baby commonly went first, and which had been agreed upon, by nursery sages, as more desirable to keep uppermost. I was aroused to the fact that "wagh!" (which I had hitherto imagined to be a phrase of the Sioux Indians) was babine for hungry: and "owgh!" implied a slight discomfort in the stomach: these being the only two incidents recognised in earlier baby life, as of any real consequence. The art of saying, "clk!"

"chirrap!" and "boh!" at the aptest moment, was one that could not be imparted, but which tact, experience, and observation would soon supply. Finally, the rules that govern dandling and dancing are of so subtle a nature, that the inspiration of the moment is, upon the whole, the safest guide.

Armed with these timely hints, I lost all uneasiness, and by the time I reached my journey's end, was really almost as anxious to meet my godson, as his doting mother could have desired.

"Now, uncle," said Mattie, composing herself, after the effusions of welcome, "how would you like to see him, *first*? Think, dear, and then say frankly. He does look so pretty, asleep! But, then, his little ways—"

"My dear," I said, hurriedly, "if there be one condition in which a child affects me more pleasingly than another, it is in that sweet repose which must be so unspeakably grateful both to the innocent little being itself, and—and—to all that stand around."

"Come, then, dear. Hush-sh. Tiptoe, please! *There!*"

Mattie was right. He was *not* a common child. I never saw so "made" a countenance in so very small a human being. Asleep in his cot, his face alone visible, he looked like a medallion of some ancient senator of Rome. His nose, commenced on the principle so much in vogue with that distinguished people, had been finished as a snub. There were purpose and determination in the close-shut lips, and a slight corrugation of the little brows, as if, even in dreams, the atom's thoughts were busy with schemes for the life that was scarcely begun.

"Calculating little beggar!" I thought, smiling, however, with all the sweetness I could command.

"He doesn't take to strangers at all," whispered Mattie.

"Thank—no, *really*?" said I, much relieved.

"But don't be uneasy, dear. He will to you," said Mattie, consolingly. "I do believe he's dreaming of you at this very moment!"

"Come, come, my dear!"

"Just hark." She put down her ear.

"Don't you see his little lips moving?"

"Uncle."

"'Bunkum,' I fancied!"

"Nonsense—only hark. 'Unky tum!'"

"'Tum!'"

"My own! Uncle is tum!" cried the doting mamma, and, in a burst of enthusiasm, she caught him up in her arms.

"Yee-ough!" yelled the child.

I rallied in desperate haste my lately acquired knowledge.

"Clk!" said I. "Catchee—that is to say, boh! How d'ye do? And heigh-diddle-diddle."

"Dear—he's beyond that," said Mattie, laughing merrily. "Kissy-wissy. Make friends. Talk, my own." And without a moment's hesitation, she placed him in my unaccustomed arms.

Rather to my surprise, the young gentleman offered no resistance, only making a clutch at a curl on my forehead, which (for reasons of my own) I evaded, compromising for the temporary misuse of my nose.

A little discouraged by the failure of my first conversational efforts, I now resolved to let my godson take the lead, and to adapt the stature of my observations to his. But, whether dumb with joy at his uncle's "tumming," or from some occult reason, not one word would he utter. Nevertheless, either the little animal was endowed with a histrionic genius far beyond his years, or he really *was* glad to see me. He smiled, after a grave, controlled fashion, and once executed a deliberate wink, as though to intimate that, when time and inclination should serve, we might have a good deal to say to one another. Presently he waxed fidgetty, and, wrestling himself down, toddled to his cot, and returned, carrying in his small fists, something which he offered to my lips. Prudence dictating a previous examination, there revealed themselves certain substances, whose crumbly and attenuated character, pronounced them, past question, to be half-sucked lumps of sugar!

After this, our friendship ripened fast. He really was an engaging little man, and his odd fancy for his old uncle not a myth at all. Without any vast interchange of ideas, we arrived at a degree of harmony that I should not have imagined possible. Imitation is said to be the most delicate form of flattery, and my godson was never tired of copying my ways. Hence, *his* little ways, hitherto innocuous, became a source of considerable inconvenience, if not worse, and were attended with results quite other than what was intended.

Among the rest of my personal effects that had attracted the young gentleman's notice, perhaps the most beloved was a brightly-decorated Turkish pipe, cut, as I

had been at some trouble to explain, from a jasmine tree, a very, very, very long way off! This latter circumstance appeared to give Babs, as he was usually called, some disturbance.

One day the pipe was missing. Great tumult and inquiry. Babs silent and meditative. Next morning the pipe had returned to its accustomed haunt. Eagerly charging it, I began to inhale the fragrant fumes, when—Pheugh! Whish! Psish! An earwig! Psha! Another! Two! Twenty! Out they came in batches, scampering in every direction! Babs, the secret being too much for his little bosom, burst into tears, and avowed that he had connived at the pipe's passing the night in the heart of a jasmine bush. "It was such a very, very long way from home." Babs evidently has a vague idea that the night had been one of festival and welcome for the distant cousin from the Levant!

Growing (as my hairdresser has for thirty years assured me) a little thin on the top of my head, I had, of late, adopted a few supplementary locks, and these, in the intimacy of friendship, I did not hesitate to dress in the presence of Babs. One day I missed both Babs and hair, and proceeding, in some agitation, to the nursery, surprised my young friend busily engaged, with his mother's scissors, in removing the very last curls from Isidor's masterpiece.

"Dessing 'oor hair!" cried Babs, triumphantly, waving the denuded scalp before my horror-stricken eyes. He had wished to save me trouble.

My godson was in the habit of paying me early visits in my room. Now, I confess to one unjustifiable propensity, that of smoking in bed; but not conceiving it necessary, at present, to warn my visitor against so evil an example, I puffed away tranquilly, as though he were not there. I shall never forget one terrible morning, when, roused by violent screams and shouts of "Fire!" from the upper story, I dashed up-stairs, through a stifling cloud of smoke, to find, happily, poor Babs already rescued, and descending, wrapped in a wet blanket, into the arms of his agonised friends. He had been trying to smoke in bed, but, novice as he was, and embarrassed with the bed-clothes, the result had been limited to fire!

These little misadventures, which, in fact, were only so many proofs of love and confidence, only served to cement our alliance, and my visit was drawing to a

most successful close, when coming down one morning, rather late, to breakfast (for I had felt a little indisposed) my niece received me with an exclamation of horror.

"My dear uncle, what ever is the matter? Why good heavens! dear, you are green!"

"Literally, or figuratively?"

"Don't laugh, dear! *Look, Harry.*" And she burst into tears.

My nephew looked at me gravely, and rang the bell.

"Whether you like it or not, my dear uncle, I shall send for our neighbour, Dr. Courtney. The doctor—*instantly*," he added, to the servant who answered his summons.

In the mean time, I had ascertained that my countenance, throat, and, in fact as far as I could see, had assumed the colour of a green caterpillar, accidentally boiled.

Dr. Courtney was with us, almost before I had completed my self-examination. After a moment, he drew me apart.

"Do you want the truth?"

"My dear sir, what else?"

"You've been poisoned!"

My heart certainly gave a throb.

"What have you been swallowing?"

"Nothing but what, I am grieved to say, every one else has partaken of."

The physician shook his head, as in doubt of that,

"Pray go to your room, and to bed. I will be with you again, within a quarter of an hour. Meanwhile, endeavour, I beg of you, to remember everything you have recently taken."

Feeling myself becoming seriously ill, I obeyed his directions, in all but the last. I could not, however, remember having partaken of anything my friends had *not*.

Dr. Courtney quickly returned, and administered such counter agents as he deemed best.

"I don't conceal from you," he said, "that I am groping somewhat in the dark. The *nature* of the poisonous matter you have swallowed is not revealed by the symptoms with sufficient accuracy. But we will do our best. You are no worse, I find."

"I—I don't know," said I, faintly. "I think I could sleep a little."

"You shall. But, first, take this."

This was something of so nauseous a character, that I begged for something to remove the flavour.

"Bit o' crockydile!" sobbed Babs, who was crying by the door. "I fetch it."

"No, no, my love," cried Mattie, entering at the moment, "that would make poor unky worse. It's poison."

"I eat good bit, whole tail!" cried Babs, exultingly.

Mattie uttered a wild shriek, and caught him in her arms. But at that instant, the nurse entered with the crocodile in question. It was an effigy, in chalk and sugar, of that interesting saurian. The doctor caught it from her, and applied his tongue.

"There's no harm, *here*, my dear lady," he remarked.

"See, he has licked off all the green, which is a deadly poison," gasped the mother.

"No, I didn't!" shouted Babs; "I scrape off pitty green, for unky, and *put it in his beer!*"

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Dr. Courtney. "Then I see my way! All has been done rightly, so far. I know the composition of this filth, and will gage my right hand that we cancel its effects."

We did so, under Providence, and this was the last time I had to complain of my godson's "little ways."

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